

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2166

AMEMBASSY PARIS

INFO USDOC WASHDC

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 1532

DEPARTMENT MAY WISH PASS OAU COLLECTIVE

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PGOV FR GV SF

SUBJ: FRANCO-SOUTH AFRICAN POWER REACTOR CONTRACT

1. SUMMARY: STORY IS APPARENTLY ABROAD AMONG
RADICAL AFRICANS THAT US IS SUPPLYING NUCLEAR CAPACITY
TO SOUTH AFRICA BY PROXY, SINCE FRENCH NUCLEAR INDUSTRY
IS OWNED BY AMERICAN MULTINATIONALS. REQUEST DATA ON
NATIONALITY OF OWNERSHIP OF FRENCH REACTOR CONSORTIUM
CONTRACTING WITH SOUTH AFRICA. RECOMMEND WAYS BE FOUND
DISCREETLY TO PUBLICIZE DISTINCTION BETWEEN US AND FRENCH
NUCLEAR INDUSTRIES. ATOMIC INDUSTRIAL FORUM MIGHT BE
INTERESTED IN DOING THIS. END SUMMARY

2. GUINEAN MINISTER OF EDUCATION MAMADI KEITA TOLD
AMBASSADOR AND PAO THAT US FIRMS, DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY,
HELD 65 PCT OF EQUITY IN FRENCH CONSORTIUM SELLING POWER
REACTOR SYSTEMS TO SOUTH AFRICA. THEREFORE, US WAS
ASSISTING SOUTH AFRICA TO OBTAIN ATOMIC BOMB WHILE
CLEVERLY HIDING BEHIND FRENCH SKIRTS.

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2. DURING EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION, AMBASSADOR UNDERLINED SAFEGUARDS AGAINST DIVERSION OF FISSIONABLE MATERIAL. AMBASSADOR ALSO STRESSED AUTONOMY OF FRENCH NUCLEAR INDUSTRY, WHICH WAS IN FACT BASED UPON LOW ENRICHMENT TECHNOLOGY VERY DIFFERENT FROM US APPROACH.

3. COMMENT: MAMADI KEITA IS PRESIDENT OF STATE COMMITTEE FOR RELATIONS WITH EASTERN EUROPE, AND MEMBER NATIONAL POLITICAL BUREAU. HE IS THE SENIOR GUINEAN CLOSEST TO MOSCOW. ALLEGATION THAT US INDUSTRY IS USING FRENCH SUBSIDIARIES TO SUPPLY NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY AND FISSIONABLE MATERIAL TO SOUTH AFRICA WILL BE BELIEVED BY THOSE MANY AFRICANS SUSPICIOUS OF US MOTIVES. KEITA WAS DEAD SURE OF HIS "FACTS" AND OF THE EXACT PERCENTAGE OF US CONTROL, WHICH SUGGESTS SOVIETS MAY BE PEDDLING THIS STORY. KEITA REGARDS THIS SITUATION AS EVIDENCE OF CONTINUING US HYPOCRISY TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA. WE HAVE NO REASON TO AGGRAVATE FRENCH PROBLEMS, BUT CREDIBILITY OF US POLICY TOWARD SOUTHERN AFRICA IS SHAKY ENOUGH WITHOUT SUCH STORIES.

4. ACTION REQUEST. AMBASSADOR UNDERTOOK TO INFORM KEITA OF ACTUAL COMPOSITION OF OWNERSHIP OF FRENCH COMPANIES ARRANGING REACTOR SALE TO SOUTH AFRICA. REQUEST EMBASSY PARIS CABLE DATA AS TO IDENTIFICATION AND PERCENTAGE OF US INTEREST IN FRENCH FIRMS INVOLVED. IF THIS INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE IN PUBLISHED FORM PLEASE FORWARD BY POUCH.

5. RECOMMENDATION. RECOMMEND DEPARTMENT SEEK MOST EFFECTIVE AND GRACEFUL METHOD TO MAKE CLEAR THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN US AND FRENCH NUCLEAR INDUSTRIES. ISSUE OF NUCLEAR RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA IS BECOMMING INCREASINGLY EMOTIONAL AMONG OAU MEMBERS. ATOMIC INDUSTRIAL FORUM MIGHT FEEL AN INSTITUTIONAL STAKE IN CLARIFYING THIS MATTER. HARROP

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